No. 1
CURSE OF THE
SPAWN
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image

CURSE OF THE SPAWN

TODD MCFARLANE & IMAGE COMICS™ PRESENTS:

"DARK FUTURE"

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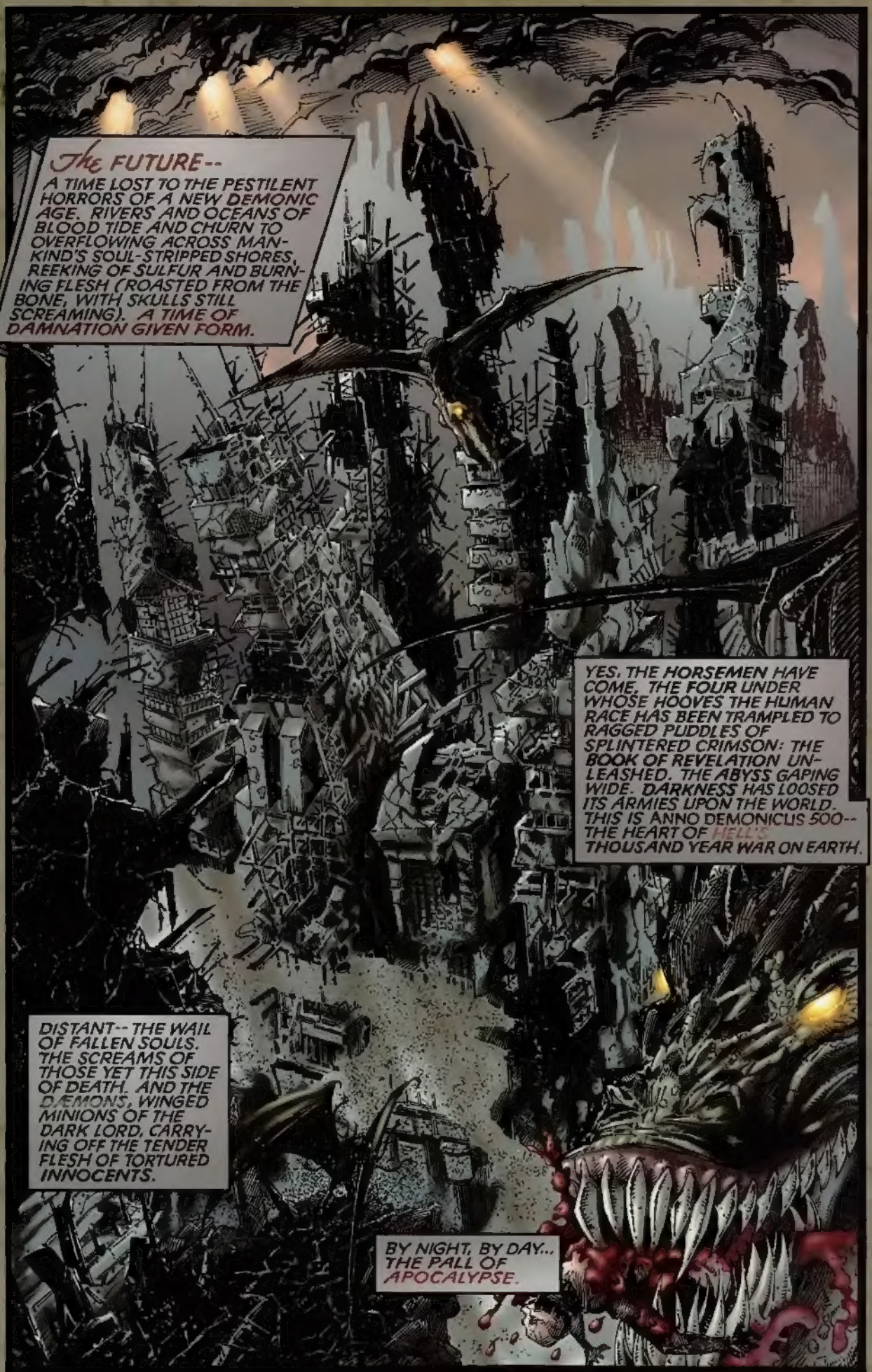
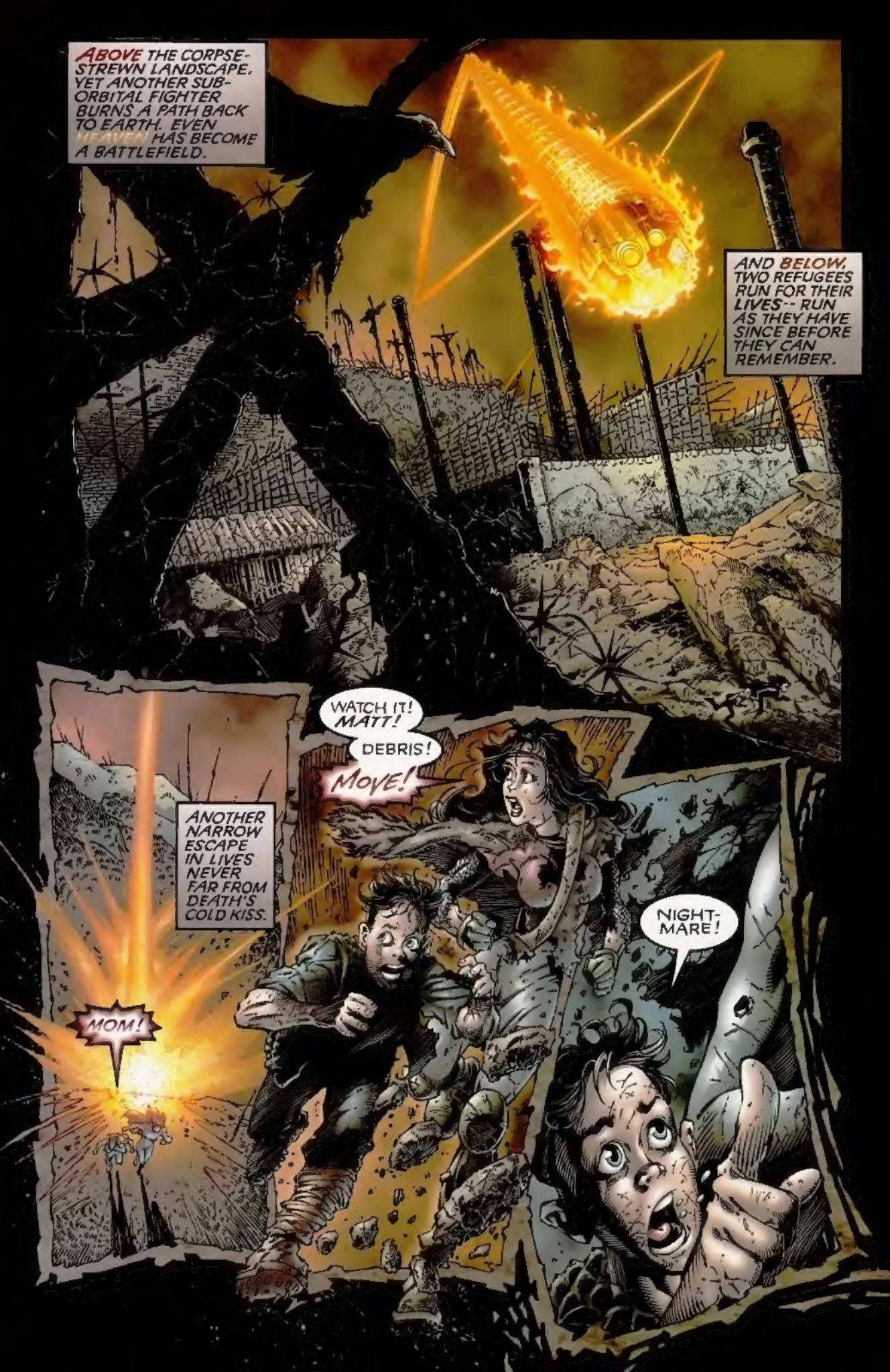

The FUTURE--
A TIME LOST TO THE PESTILENT HORRORS OF A NEW DEMONIC AGE. RIVERS AND OCEANS OF BLOOD TIDE AND CHURN TO OVERFLOWING ACROSS MANKIND'S SOUL-STRIPPED SHORES, REEKING OF SULFUR AND BURNING FLESH (ROASTED FROM THE BONE, WITH SKULLS STILL SCREAMING). A TIME OF DAMNATION GIVEN FORM.
YES, THE HORSEMEN HAVE COME. THE FOUR UNDER WHOSE HOOVES THE HUMAN RACE HAS BEEN TRAMPLED TO RAGGED PUDDLES OF SPLINTERED CRIMSON: THE BOOK OF REVELATION UNLEASHED. THE ABYSS GAPING WIDE. DARKNESS HAS LOOSED ITS ARMIES UPON THE WORLD. THIS IS ANNO DEMONICUS 500-- THE HEART OF HELL'S THOUSAND YEAR WAR ON EARTH.
DISTANT-- THE WAIL OF FALLEN SOULS. THE SCREAMS OF THOSE YET THIS SIDE OF DEATH. AND THE DÆMONS, WINGED MINIONS OF THE DARK LORD, CARRYING OFF THE TENDER FLESH OF TORTURED INNOCENTS.
BY NIGHT, BY DAY... THE PALL OF APOCALYPSE.

FFWUZZT
ABADDON, THE DESTROYER--CHIEF OF THE DEMON LOCUSTS, A CHOSEN SON OF THE APOCALYPSE AND SOVEREIGN OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, REGARDS AN ARENA OF BLOOD AS HUMANITY, THE CHILDREN OF GOD, ARE DRIVEN LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER. SCREAMS FOLLOW SCREAMS IN A CRESCENDO OF DESPAIR.
DRIVE THEM! HOUND THEM TO THE DARKEST DEPTHS! NO MERCY! NO SALVATION!
WHERE ARE YOUR PRECIOUS MESSIAHS NOW?! WHERE IS YOUR GOD?!!
AHHAHAHAHAHA!!
SCREEEHSSS
THE VOICES OF HIS SCREELING TENDRILS ARE LIKE JAGGED KNIVES SCRAPING SLOWLY ACROSS DRIED FEMURS.
SHRED THEM! SHRED THEM ALL!!!
AND BELOW--THEY COME. COLD. DEAD. RELENTLESS. THE NECRO-SOLDIERS. THE HEAVILY-ARMED UNDEAD. ZOMBIES POWERED BY HELL'S DARK LIGHT.
IT'S THE SAME EVERYWHERE, ALL OVER THE BURNING EARTH: INNOCENTS CORNERED, INNOCENTS PLEADING FOR WHAT NO LONGER EXISTS--MERCY.
NO! PLEASE! GOD!
...YEA, THOUGH I WALK IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL--
MOMMY?!
DON'T LOOK, SWEETHEART. CLOSE YOUR EYES...
THERE IS NO MERCY--EVEN IN DEATH.
FSSRRU!
'LECTRO-PULSE CANNONS DO THEIR WORST--A FIERY HORROR SHOW DESIGNED TO SHATTER LIFE, SOMETHING THEY DO TOO WELL. BUT, THIS THE PURPOSE OF THEIR WIELDERS--
-- THE NECRO-SOLDIERS KNOWN AS NIGHTMARES.
KOAK!
FEAR EVIL...


ABOVE THE CORPSE-STREWN LANDSCAPE, YET ANOTHER SUB-ORBITAL FIGHTER BURNS A PATH BACK TO EARTH. EVEN HEAVEN HAS BECOME A BATTLEFIELD.
AND BELOW, TWO REFUGEES RUN FOR THEIR LIVES -- RUN AS THEY HAVE SINCE BEFORE THEY CAN REMEMBER.
WATCH IT! MATT!
DEBRIS!
MOVE!
ANOTHER NARROW ESCAPE IN LIVES NEVER FAR FROM DEATH'S COLD KISS.
MOM!
NIGHT-MARE!

A PAIR OF PRIZES. TROPHY BONES--AND FLESH FOR FEASTING
THE BOY'S INTESTINES WILL MAKE A NICE BANDOLIER
HAA HA HA
NOW--SHALL WE DANCE?!
THE WOMAN, MADRID, ATTACKS WITHOUT FEAR OR HESITATION. SHE KNOWS THEIR LIVES HANG IN THE HEARTBEAT BETWEEN INACTION AND ATTACK.
MATTHEW--GET DOWN!
USING HER STOLEN 'LECTRO CANNON, CALLED A SPINNER, SHE VAPORIZES THE NIGHTMARE.
A NIGHTMARE'S DEATH-WAIL IS ALWAYS BONE-CHILLING.
THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER, MOM!
WE'RE OKAY FOR NOW.
COME ON MAYBE THE DEAD CAN GIVE US SOME COVER.

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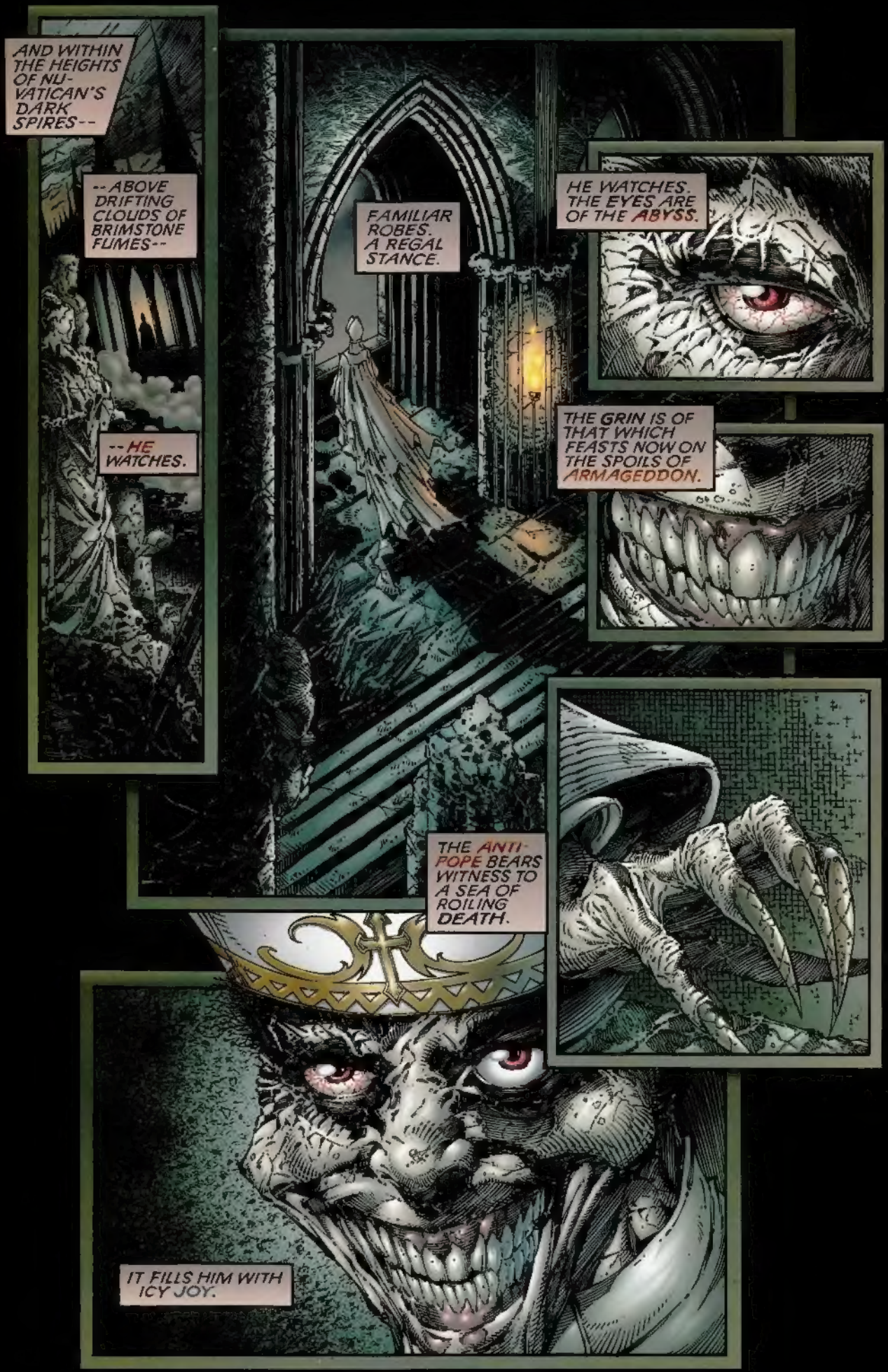
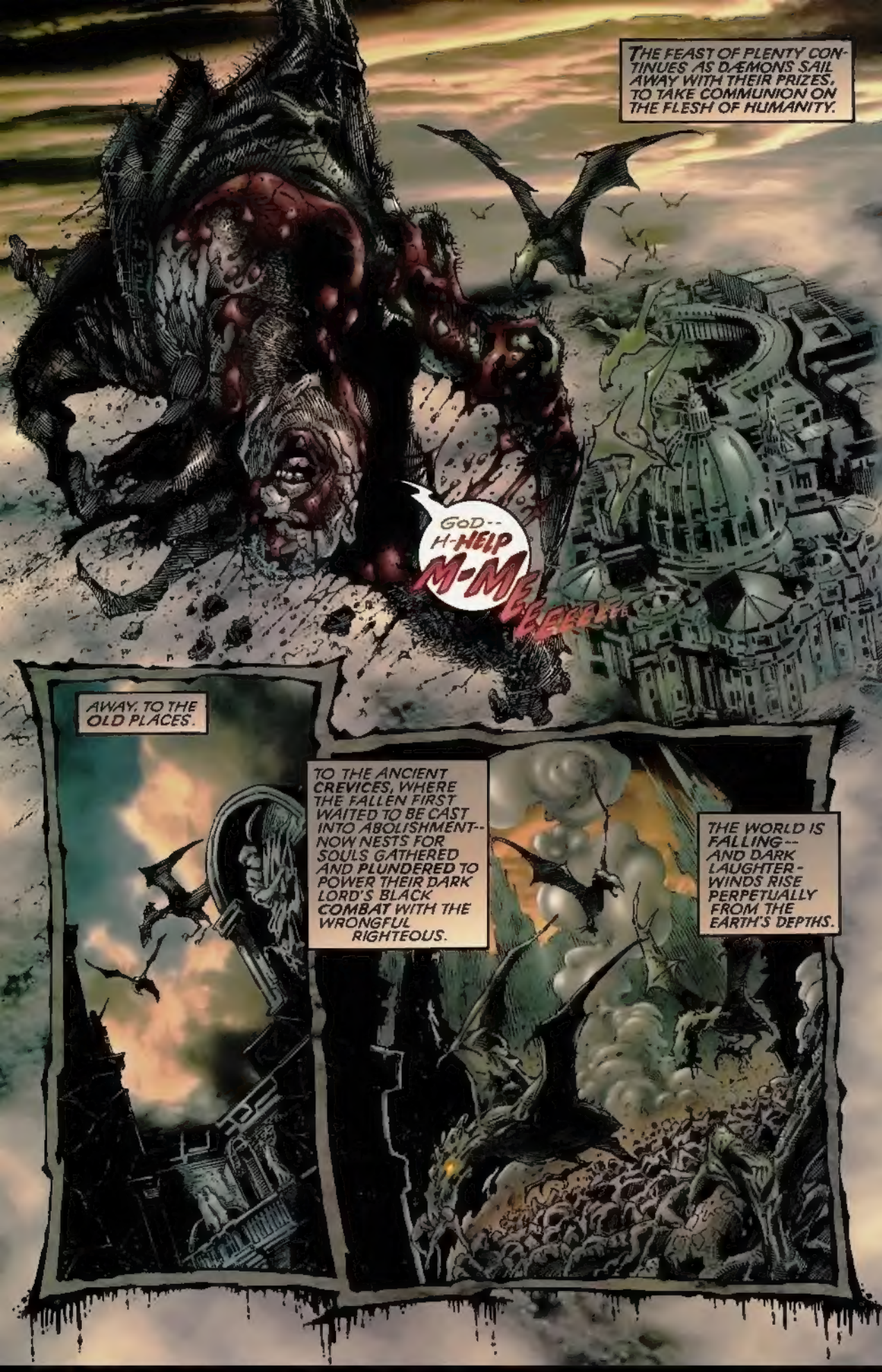
IN A WORLD OF FLAME AND WRECKAGE, AMID THE BLOOD AND ENDLESS SCREAMS, ONE BUILDING STANDS UNDAMAGED. IT'S A CATHEDRAL COMPLEX FIVE TIMES THE SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL VATICAN.
THIS IS NU-VATICAN CITY, A NECROPOLIS BORDERED BY WALLS BUILT OF HUMAN BONE AND BLOOD. EACH NEW MISERY IS ANOTHER BRICK IN ITS SPRAWLING BATTLEMENTS.
AND ATOP NU-VATICAN'S WALLS, NIGHTMARE SENTRIES PATROL, GUARDING HELL'S PRECIOUS OUTPOST.


AND WITHIN THE HEIGHTS OF NU-VATICAN'S DARK SPIRES--
--ABOVE DRIFTING CLOUDS OF BRIMSTONE FUMES--
--HE WATCHES.
FAMILIAR ROBES. A REGAL STANCE.
HE WATCHES. THE EYES ARE OF THE ABYSS.
THE GRIN IS OF THAT WHICH FEASTS NOW ON THE SPOILS OF ARMAGEDDON.
THE ANTI-POPE BEARS WITNESS TO A SEA OF ROILING DEATH.
IT FILLS HIM WITH ICY JOY.

A CARDINAL, ONE OF THE MANY DARK DISCIPLES OF THE ANTITHESIS, BASKS IN HIS ANTI-POPE'S BLACK WARMTH.
THE DARK DAYS GROW MORE CRIMSON, EMINENCE.
THE CONGREGATION IS IN THE FULL THROES OF WORSHIP.
THE NON-BELIEVERS, THE HERETICS, THE LIGHT-SINNERS, WILL SOON BE BROUGHT TO HEEL.
JOYOUS.


THE FEAST OF PLENTY CONTINUES AS DÆMONS SAIL AWAY WITH THEIR PRIZES, TO TAKE COMMUNION ON THE FLESH OF HUMANITY.
GOD-- H-HELP M-ME
AWAY, TO THE OLD PLACES.
TO THE ANCIENT CREVICES, WHERE THE FALLEN FIRST WAITED TO BE CAST INTO ABOLISHMENT-- NOW NESTS FOR SOULS GATHERED AND PLUNDERED TO POWER THEIR DARK LORD'S BLACK COMBAT WITH THE WRONGFUL RIGHTEOUS.
THE WORLD IS FALLING-- AND DARK LAUGHTER-WINDS RISE PERPETUALLY FROM THE EARTH'S DEPTHS.

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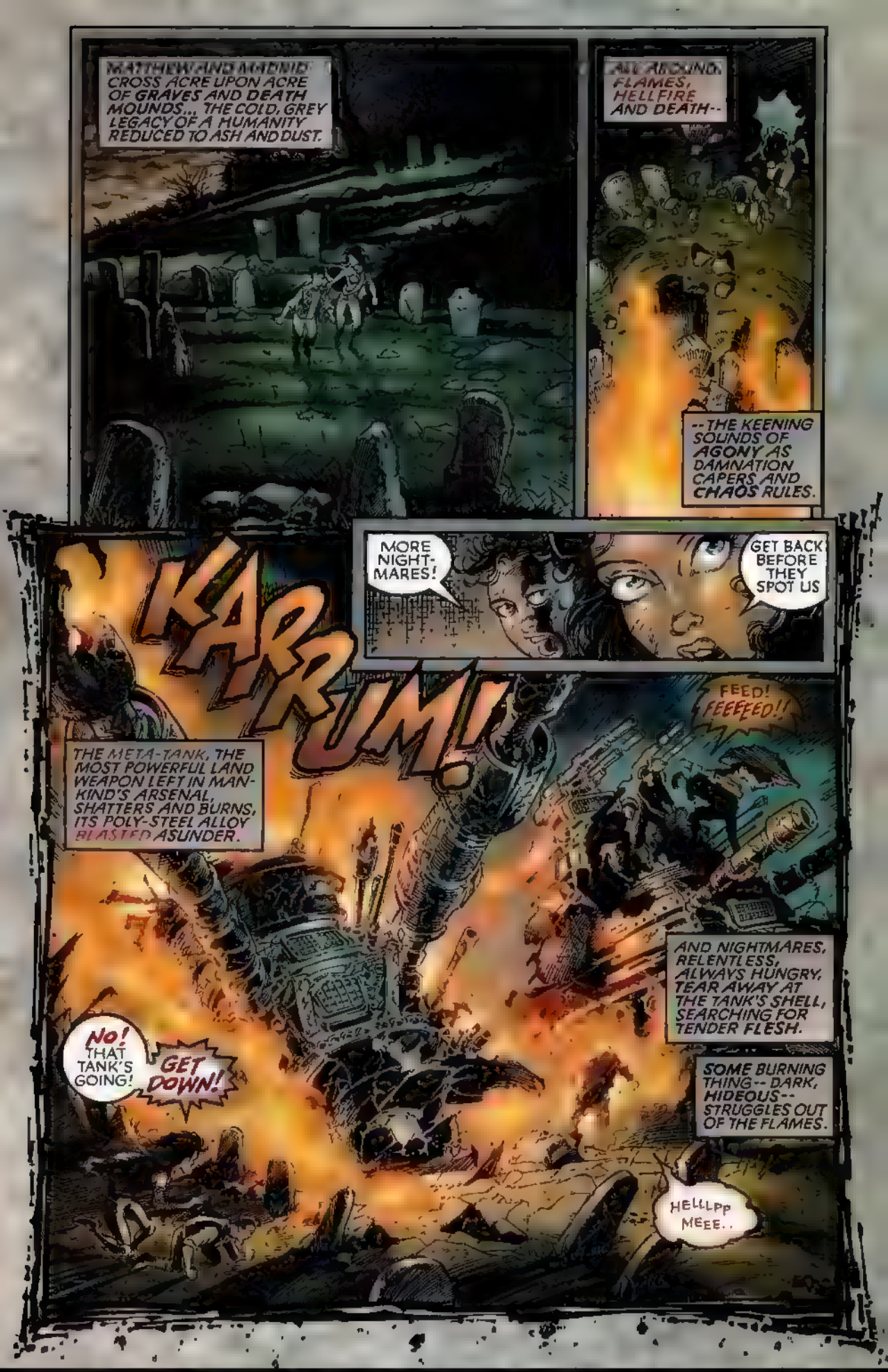
MATTHEW AND MADNIA CROSS ACRE UPON ACRE OF GRAVES AND DEATH MOUNDS... THE COLD, GREY LEGACY OF A HUMANITY REDUCED TO ASH AND DUST.
ALL AROUND, FLAMES, HELLFIRE AND DEATH--
--THE KEENING SOUNDS OF AGONY AS DAMNATION CAPERS AND CHAOS RULES.
MORE NIGHT-MARES!
GET BACK BEFORE THEY SPOT US
KA-RUM!
FEED! FEEEEED!!
THE META-TANK, THE MOST POWERFUL LAND WEAPON LEFT IN MAN-KIND'S ARSENAL, SHATTERS AND BURNS, ITS POLY-STEEL ALLOY BLASTED ASUNDER.
AND NIGHTMARES, RELENTLESS, ALWAYS HUNGRY, TEAR AWAY AT THE TANK'S SHELL, SEARCHING FOR TENDER FLESH.
No! THAT TANK'S GOING!
GET DOWN!
SOME BURNING THING-- DARK, HIDEOUS-- STRUGGLES OUT OF THE FLAMES.
HELLLPP MEEE..

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PLEEZE!
--IN THE NAME OF GOD!
HE'S HUMAN--ONE OF US--
DON'T TOUCH HIM--THE NECRO-FLAMES HAVE HIM.
IT'S TOO LATE.
THUD-
THE SOLDIER BURNS FROM THE INSIDE OUT. HELLISH NECRO-FLAME SEARS HIS ORGANS. PAN-FRIES HIS BRAIN--
--UNTIL HIS EYES AND GREY MATTER SWELL AND BOIL FROM HIS SKULL.
MADRID AND MATTHEW CAN ONLY STAND WITNESS TO A HORROR THEY VIEW ALL TOO OFTEN.
GAAAHHH

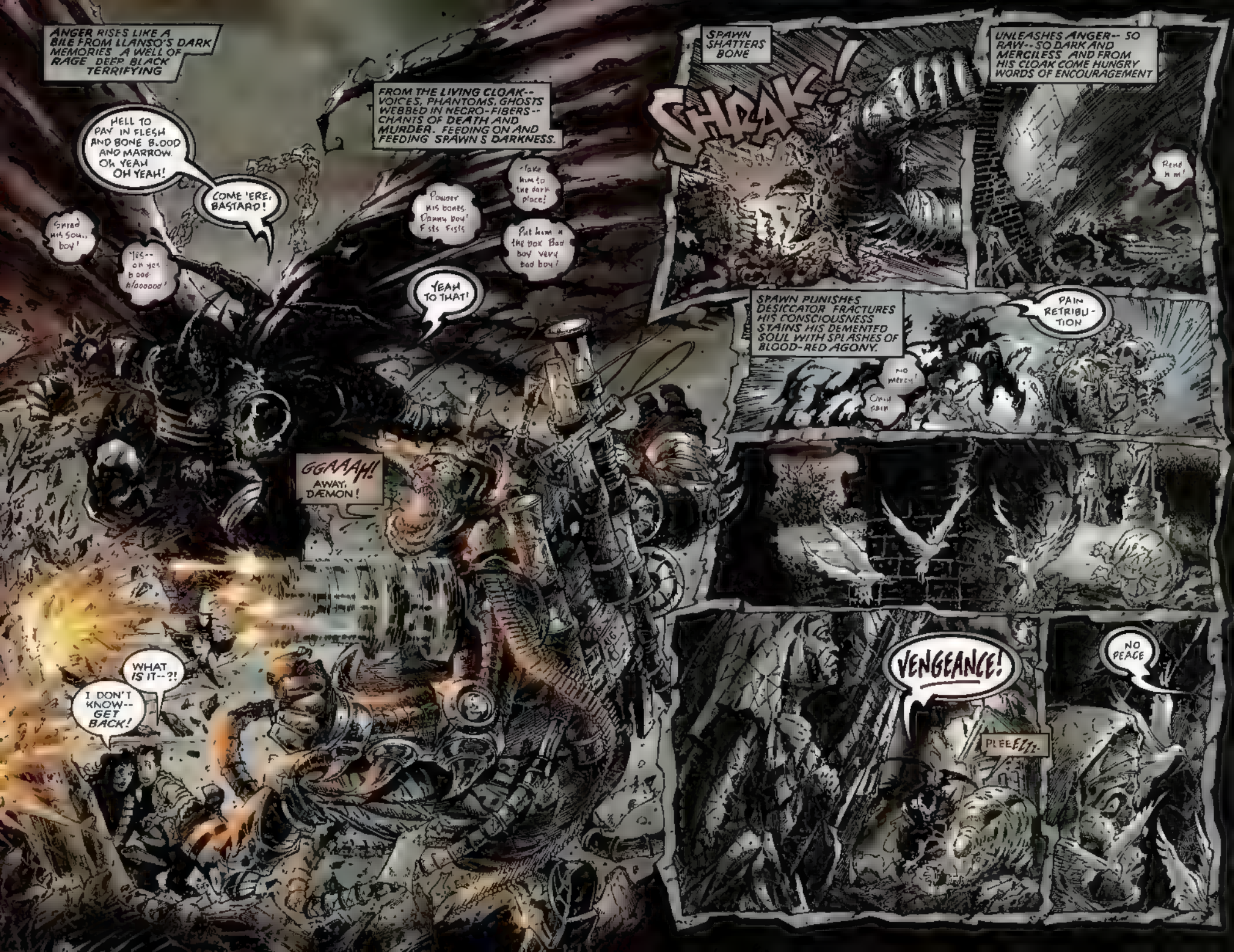
BUT NOW-- A NEW HORROR AMBLES FORWARD.
FLUIDS MUSTN'T BE LOST.
IT'S A WASTE, I TELL YA-- A WASTE AND A DAMN SHAME.
NOW WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS THAT LOVELY SQUEEZABLE JUICE BOX? BURNING?!
WASTE NOT, WANT NOT-- AND I WANT. YES. QUENCHABLE-- DRENCHABLE. COME TO PAPA!
LIVING WIRES SNAP FROM WRIST MECHANISMS-- SLASH DEEP INTO THE BURNING SOLDIER, STILL ENCUMBERED WITH LIFE.
AND NOW-- RAPED OF FLUIDS.
SAPPED OF ALL CELLULAR MOISTURE.
SLOSH SLOSH SPLOSH
UNTIL THE SOLDIER IS NOTHING MORE THAN HUSK-- DRIED UNTIL THE BRITTLE FLESH SPLITS APART.
POK

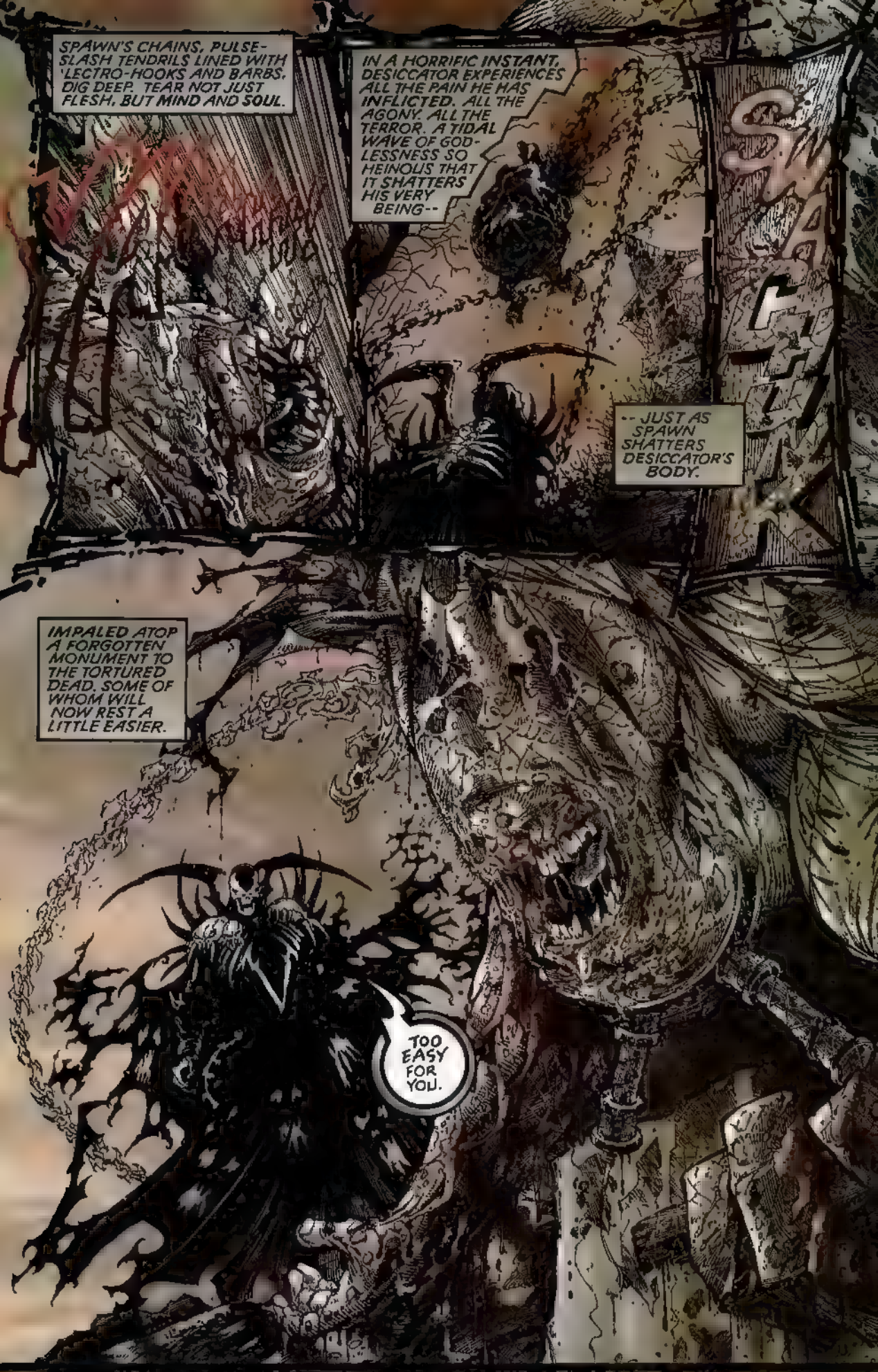
MORE FLUID. COME HERE, LITTLE ONES.
COME FEED MY NEED!
WATER IS PRECIOUS. THE STUFF OF ... AND WHERE ELSE IS IT STILL PURE?
NOT IN BLOOD-CHOKED LAKES-- NOT IN PESTILENT RIVERS--
-- BUT IN PEOPLE!
COME TO ME, CHILDREN. BAPTIZE ME WITH YOUR NUTRIENTS. COME HERE, DAMN YOU!
DESICCATOR DEMANDS IT!!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE YOUR FATE! THIS IS THE EVIL EARTH. THE PLACE OF DAMNATION.
HOW CAN YOU ESCAPE DAMNATION--?
YOU CAN'T!
A BLAST FROM DESICCATOR'S PVA-44\0145 PSI-PULSE CANNON DRIVES MADRID AND HER SON IN THE DESIRED DIRECTION.
FFUUT
SPAK SPAK SPAK
FINE. RUN! BUT DON'T CUT YOURSELVES. DON'T SPILL A DROP OF YOUR PRICELESS FLUID!
THIS IS DESICCATOR'S HUNTING GROUND.

MADRID AND MATTHEW HEAD DOWN AN ALLEYWAY BETWEEN THE FALLEN WALLS OF HOTELS TURNED MAUSOLEUMS.
BUT THIS TIME THE ROUTES OF ESCAPE HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. DEATH, THE HUNTER, HAS FINALLY RUN THEM DOWN.
MADRID BLAMES HERSELF. BRINGING A CHILD INTO THIS UNHOLY WORLD...! BUT SHE HAD NO CHOICE.
MOM--?!
THEY STAND THEIR GROUND AGAINST THE WALLS OF BONES, FETID WITH DEATH. SOULS SCREAM ALL AROUND THEM, ROBBED OF SALVATION. THE GATES OF HEAVEN SLAMMED CLOSED LONG AGO.
MADRID KNOWS SHE'S ONLY GOT ONE CHANCE. SHE HAS TO PICK HER MOMENT.
PLEASE TAKE ME. SPARE MY SON.
BEGGING FOR MERCY? JUST WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
MADRID DRAWS HER SPINNER-- BUT THIS TIME-- SHE FAILS.
AAAH!
Nooo!
FFRRM
THAT PSI-GRAPPLER SHOULD HOLD YOU WHILE I DRAIN THE BOY FIRST.
SORRY, SON. BUT THIS IS GONNA HURT.
A LOT!

THE CORPSE MOUND BEHIND MADRID AND MATTHEW SHATTERS. SKULLS AND BONES TOPPLE FORWARD. THE DEAD MAKE WAY AS SOMETHING RISES FROM THEIR MIDST.
WHAA--?!
AAAAAAAAH
BONES SPLINTER-- SOULS SCREAM FROM EARTH'S BOWELS--
--AND A NEW HELLSPAWN RISES.
AAAH!
RENT BY BIRTH PAINS AS HE'S DRIVEN FROM HELL'S SPIKE-LINED RECTUM. THE OLD LIFE, STILL IN VIEW, FALLS AWAY LIKE SHATTERED GLASS.
NOOOO! NOT YET! NOT READY!
AAAHHH!
HIS MIND, DRIVEN BY PAIN. BLINDED BY AGONY AND IMAGES. HORROR AND RAGE.
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE LAST.
NOW.
HERE.
A NEW SPAWN ERUPTS FORTH. A MAN ONCE NAMED DANIEL LLANSO.
CHARRED DOWN TO THE BONE-- IN PERPETUAL PAIN, FEELS FIBERS, POLY-ALLOY AND PLEXI-PLASTIC RODS THROUGHOUT HIS UNDER-FLESH, AND THE NECRO-FLESH, LIKE A WHIP ACROSS HIS SPARKING MIND AND STORM-SHATTERED SOUL.
TORRENTIAL CURRENTS-- EMOTIONS, MOMENTS, ANGUISH-- FROM A LIFE BEFORE.

RAGE GRIPS THE MAN WHO ONCE WAS DANIEL LLANSO, HIS MIND FUELED BY FERAL SHORT-CIRCUITS INTER-MINGLED WITH FLASHBACKS FROM A LIFE OF HUMAN HORRORS
I WON'T LET YOU HURT THEM!
WHAT IS THIS?!
AWAY, DÆMON THESE MORSELS BELONG TO ME!
BUT LLANSO DOESN'T SEE DESICCATOR. BUT HIS OWN TORMEN TOR A DRUNK AN ABUSER A MAN WHO USES HIS FISTS TO OFFSET HIS WHITE TRASH FRUSTRATIONS
WORKING CLASS POOR IN TRAILER DOMES ON THE MOON'S DARK SIDE. SLAVE WAGES A MAN'S LIFE WHITTLED AWAY WITH EVERY SECOND IN THE AIRLESS, GODLESS VOID.
WORK HARD!
AND THE BOY DANNY WATCHES THE MAN PUMMEL HIS MOTHER AND SISTER UNTIL THE FLOOR IS AWASH WITH BLOOD, THE FISTS-THE SCREAMS-- THE FRACTURED BONE--
FOOD ON THE DAMN TABLE! DRINK IN MY HAND! ALL I ASK!
PUNISHMENT'S COMIN' GONNA BE HELL TO PAY!
UNTIL THE BOY CAN TAKE NO MORE
NO MORE!
AND HE GRABS THE RIVET-LASER THEN, THE FLASH THE SPRAY OF BLOOD
YOU WON'T HURT THEM AGAIN! I WON'T LET YOU!
AND THE ANGER THE TEARS AND THE DIRE SENSE OF RELIEF
NOW THAT HIS FATHER IS FINALLY DEAD.
BLOOD ON HIS SOUL. COLD AND STRANGELY COMFORTING
DANNY! NOO!
HAD TO, MOM-- HAD TO...!
WANTED TO..!


ANGER RISES LIKE A BILE FROM LLANSO'S DARK MEMORIES A WELL OF RAGE DEEP BLACK TERRIFYING
FROM THE LIVING CLOAK-- VOICES, PHANTOMS, GHOSTS WEBBED IN NECRO-FIBERS-- CHANTS OF DEATH AND MURDER. FEEDING ON AND FEEDING SPAWN'S DARKNESS.
HELL TO PAY IN FLESH AND BONE BLOOD AND MARROW. OH YEAH OH YEAH!
COME 'ERE, BASTARD!
Shred his soul, boy!
Yes-- oh yes blood b/ooooood
Powder his bones. Dammy boy! Fists fists
Take him to the dark place!
Put him in the box Bad boy very bad boy!
YEAH TO THAT!
GGAAAH! AWAY, DÆMON!
WHAT IS IT--?!
I DON'T KNOW-- GET BACK!
SPAWN SHATTERS BONE
SHAK!
UNLEASHES ANGER-- SO RAW-- SO DARK AND MERCILESS AND FROM HIS CLOAK COME HUNGRY WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT
Rend him!
SPAWN PUNISHES DESICCATOR FRACTURES HIS CONSCIOUSNESS STAINS HIS DEMENTED SOUL WITH SPLASHES OF BLOOD-RED AGONY.
PAIN RETRIBUTION
NO MERCY!
Child pain
VENGEANCE!
PLEEEZZ.
NO PEACE


SPAWN'S CHAINS, PULSE-SLASH TENDRILS LINED WITH 'LECTRO-HOOKS AND BARBS, DIG DEEP. TEAR NOT JUST FLESH, BUT MIND AND SOUL.
IN A HORRIFIC INSTANT, DESICCATOR EXPERIENCES ALL THE PAIN HE HAS INFLICTED. ALL THE AGONY. ALL THE TERROR. A TIDAL WAVE OF GOD-LESSNESS SO HEINOUS THAT IT SHATTERS HIS VERY BEING--
-- JUST AS SPAWN SHATTERS DESICCATOR'S BODY.
IMPALED ATOP A FORGOTTEN MONUMENT TO THE TORTURED DEAD, SOME OF WHOM WILL NOW REST A LITTLE EASIER.
TOO EASY FOR YOU.

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MADRID STANDS FIRM AS SPAWN TURNS. AFRAID TO RUN. AFRAID TO SHOOT SHE KNOWS THAT THIS CREATURE JUST SAVED THEIR LIVES. BUT TO WHAT END?
MOM--?
DON'T MOVE-- --STAY AWAY FROM US!
LIFE TO DEATH-- DEATH TO LIFE...
I HEAR ITS LAUGHTER. DON'T YOU?
IT KNEW I WASN'T READY. KNEW I WOULD'VE PROMISED ANYTHING--
I WON'T HURT YOU--
TAKE ANOTHER STEP, UGLY, AND 'HURT' IS WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN A WORLD OF.
MOM-- I THINK HE MEANS IT.
YOU-- HAVE A SON...?
WAIT-- NO. HOW LONG...?
DON'T YOU KNOW ME...?

THE MEMORIES...
THE WORLD...
MY GOD...
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

IMAGE INFO

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH 47

Hi-dee-ho Hi Dee Ho We l a lot of stuff has happened since last month. I've been in and out of LA these last four weeks, making appearances on the movie set

To update you all on the progress of the film, we have signed the following actors to date; their roles appear in brackets. Michael Jai White (Simmons/Spawn) John Leguizamo (Clown) Martin Sheen (Jason Wynn) Richard Harris (Cogliostro), D B. Sweeney (Fitzgerald) Theresa Randle (Wanda) and Melinda Clarke (a character I can't announce yet!) Oh yeah, and Spaz A very nice cast indeed Everyone has been really cool to work with asking questions about their character or the series in general

We started filming the movie on August 13th and will continue the shoot until November 15th, in and around LA Todd and I have been out there a few times each Actually I have been there every week for at least two or three days per week and it is very interesting watching the whole process One of the more exciting aspects of the production, is the viewing of the "dailies" every day In watching the dailies you are viewing the film that was shot the previous day It's amazing how different everything looks on screen compared to there on the set, or on location

The scenes shot so far include A k lling a few guys in an airport tower, Al telling Wynn he wants to leave the AS, Al and Wanda in a tender moment, Spawn doing Spawn e type things etc The really cool action sequences will be shot in September and October Including the destruction of an oil refinery, dressed to look like a North Korean chemical weapons plant Well that's it on the movie More next month

Look for these upcoming Spawn projects In a few weeks you will see a book on the shelves that looks like a leather bound comic with the Spawn symbol embossed on it (it's not leather but a printed paper texture) This is the infamous "Spawn Bible" Everything you ever wanted to know about Spawn and/or any other SPAwn character s in this thing! Inside you will find character drawings descriptions etc All artwork was drawn by the world renowned Greg Capullo Danny Miki and Kevin Conrad I'm telling you the stuff looks great (Grandma Blake being the greatest)

Next we have the introduction of the second Spawn monthly title "Curse of Spawn" Curse will be comprised of several mini-stories within the ongoing monthly framework of a regular Spawn monthly The first story was written by Alan McElroy who wrote both the Spawn movie and animated series Artwork chores are being handled by Danny Miki and Dwayne Turner Let me tell you these two guys look killer together

Beau Smith just returned from Diamond where he showed all of the brass the first issue and they freaked If you like dark and menacing this is going to be your book Think Spawn the Vertigo editions Alan is one hell of a writer and the dark story he has come up with is a delight for all, unless you have a very weak stomach

As for the artwork Danny and Dwayne (doesn't that sound like a comedy duo?) have been working on the look of this new Spawn for a while now and have really come up with a killer look Picture more spikes more attitude and more viciousness (See the two page ad on pages 28 and 29 herein) Todd is more than happy with everything and we are really looking forward to the series release to hear your all's opinion Could there possibly a toy in the works

Lastly look for the Spawn Chromium trading cards out next week We just received the first case today and of course opened up all of the packs Ted, Kris and everyone else at WildStorm really worked overtime on the set and it shows! Hands down it is the best looking set they have ever produced The set contains 90 cards in the series, with 9 chase flick motion cards and 1 full motion card Todd drew one each of the regular set cards and the flick motion, Greg Capullo drew the full motion card Please for the grace of Todd check this set out Thanks again Ted and Kris you guys were both great to work with and the final product looks spectacular

Well that's it for now Take care More movie animation and all around general Spawn stuff next month All my best

-Terry Fitzgerald

ps Below is a photo of the Spawn softball team here in Phoenix, Arizona Top row three over is Jason McFarlane Todd's cousin and an employee of the company The boys did really well In case the trophy didn't give it away beating the other team 20-19 in the final game Way to go boys thanks for making Team Spawn number one!

MONTHLY

As you can see by the word at the top of the page, I want to make it perfectly clear to everybody that this book is not just a short mini-series, one-shot or something that is only going to be around for half a year. This is indeed the second on-going book from my studio. As those who follow my book know, Spawn is currently up to issue #53. It's taken me 4 1/2 years to commit to another book. Only now do I feel that I can match the quality that I try to put into each Spawn issue.

My belief has always been that each book should have a purpose and not just be another vehicle to make more money. With the success of the original Spawn book that premiered in June of 1992 and with the advent of the toys, comics and all the Hollywood projects that are currently in production, it would have been very easy for me to exploit this character. Part of Spawn's success lies in the fact that I don't think I've taken advantage of you, the consumer. I could easily say, "If I can squeeze $2.00 a month out of you, then I can easily push you to $4.00. Now, if I can get $4.00 out of you then why wouldn't you give me $8.00?" With the way the merchandising world currently works, the majority of the successful licensed products are aimed at four to seven year olds. Therefore, business people tend to see everything in terms of Walt Disney and thus, rose colored glasses. In my mind, there is more than enough cute stuff out there for kids. Sometimes I think we shy away from the ugly a little too fast. Besides, twelve year old kids are being forgotten about. Other than video games and a cool bike there is not much out there for them. So, this book is my attempt to say thank you for supporting me for 4 1/2 years and at the same time I hope it's a worthy successor to Spawn.

Like with almost anything one gets involved with, there needs to be some type of progression in order to keep one intrigued as both tastes and interests matures. For example, when I was younger I first started going to G rated movies, but when I was twelve those movies no longer appealed to me and I progressed to PG rated movies. Just like with movies, comics should have different levels. Curse of the Spawn, in my opinion, takes the reader to the next level. With more sophisticated story lines, I am hoping that this book will capture your attention and enable you to escape from your nine-to-five job to a world of fantasy and intrigue. Spawn, after 50 issues has accomplished a lot and even though it's a big cut above Superman or Batman, I know as a comic book reader how important it is to keep the reader involved in the story while at the same time progressing to a higher level. This is what I'm striving for within the pages of Curse of the Spawn.

Spawn readers are generally age twelve and up, and Curse of the Spawn should appeal to those who keep writing and asking me to turn the heat up on the concept of the Spawn character. But first, I needed to give you some cool visuals and then wrap them around a story that captured your attention. The writer of the book, Alan McElroy, also wrote the screen play for the Spawn movie that is currently in production as well as the majority of the scripts for the animated series at HBO. Being the Executive Producer on the HBO show, I chose Alan McElroy to write the series because unlike many other writers who have taken a crack at Spawn, Alan "gets it." He understands the character almost as well as I do and has in fact added things that I would never have thought of. So, when I decided to start up another monthly title I knew Alan McElroy could do it justice. With his creative writing style and detailed stories, he has provided me with 500 pieces to a puzzle instead of the 50 I had before.

Artistically, I have two guys who are unequivocally doing the best work of their career. Dwayne Turner, who's been doing a book at DC for the last year and a half called Sovereign Seven, is making a concentrated attempt to accommodate the darker, grittier, moodier story lines that we're going to be telling. Danny Miki, if not next year then very shortly, should be winning awards for being the top inker in this business. For you old guys who enjoy a Bernie Wrightson/Frankenstein-kind-of-Swamp-Thing feel, Danny adds a horror oriented twist to this title. I want Curse of the Spawn to be a spooky, scary series and for those of you who've been around for four or five years, it's something you can re-cut some more teeth on. You'll see that instead of simplifying this character, I'm going to make him a lot more complicated.

I'm not going to sell you out with this book or anything I do. The price tag is still $1.95 after 4 1/2 years and I'd like to thank you for putting me in a position where I can do this. So this is my way of returning the favor for your support. I hope you like it. Send in your letters because we're going to start a letters column next month and we'd like to hear back from you.

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HBO Animation

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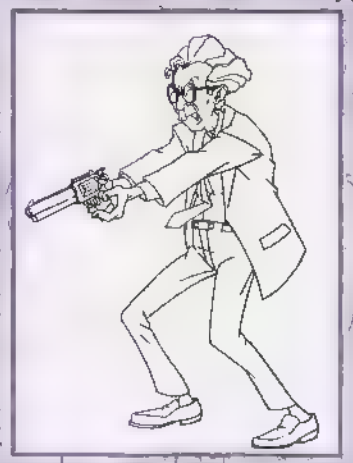
Why HBO?

After the immediate success of Spawn the comic book, almost every major television network approached Todd expressing interest in creating a Spawn cartoon for Saturday mornings. Knowing that he controlled Spawn's destiny, Todd quickly realized that Spawn could not be translated to network television without losing what he felt was an integral part of both the story line and subsequent success of Spawn. Similarly, these networks were only interested in the character of Spawn and not Todd's creative input on how the cartoon should be developed and animated. At this point back in 1993, Spawn only consisted of approximately 10 issues, and unlike many other super heroes such as Batman and Superman, with story lines based over 200 issues, Spawn's development as a character had only just begun. Even now at issue #32 Spawn's character is still being primarily developed as each new encounter helps alter his existence as a Spawn. Todd believed that developing a cartoon at this early point in Spawn's existence could be premature. So, why did HBO change Todd's mind?

HBO, known for their original programming from shows such as "Comedy Reset" to "Taxicab Confessions", was interested in trying an animated project. Animation was, once again, becoming very popular in North America with Disney's overwhelming success with their yearly feature films and new studios, such as the one run by Don Bluth, also releasing animated features almost yearly. HBO was interested in capturing some of that audience while at the same time changing the way animation was viewed by many North Americans. Unlike the Japanese, with adult features such as "Akira" and "Ghost in the Shell", Americans tend to view animation as cartoons targeting children. It was at that time that HBO approached Todd with their idea to create an adult-oriented animated series.

HBO became interested in Spawn for several reasons. If they were going to change America's perception of animation they needed to do it with something unique, original, and captivating. Spawn fit all those requirements, Eric Radomski, the Supervising Director on the Spawn animated series explains, "the hero Spawn is very human and appealing. The stories that Todd has already woven are strong providing us, at HBO, with the ability to create a powerful show...by attempting to bring a non-traditional method of story telling to the screen." Spawn is a "guy in limbo who is emotionally torn to pieces...and this makes animating this particular story a new, yet exciting, challenge." Even with HBO's enthusiasm Todd still felt that it might be too early to bring Spawn truly to life in an animated form as the character was so new. "I wasn't even sure where Spawn was going so how would a huge network like HBO be able to create an animated show while still keeping true to the character", Todd questioned.

Todd's hesitation changed when HBO asked Todd to be the Executive Producer on the show. In some respects, HBO took quite a chance with this move as the Executive Producer has full control over the entire show. In short, Todd can approve or disapprove any aspect on the entire series, at any time up, until the day it airs. HBO knew that Todd didn't have any previous experience in the world of television, animation or movie making but what he did have was a passion for his character, and the proven determination to settle for nothing but the best. Additionally, HBO realized that a lot of this character's success was due to its creator. They also felt that the show could be a lot stronger, and thus more successful, if the creator of Spawn also had daily input on their production from choosing the script writers, approving the scripts, designing a lot of the character designs, approving the animators and director, approving the actors hired to bring these character's voices to life, choosing the background music, and ensuring that the overall feel within the pages of each Spawn issue would be translated to the television screen. Todd has created a very different super hero with Spawn, and if HBO could utilize Todd's creative mind while developing the show, the series would be stronger in the long run. Todd took HBO up on their offer as he knew that being the Executive Producer on the show would ensure that the series would not only be to his liking, but would also remain true to the story of Spawn. The final deal breaker came when Todd asked the executives at HBO, "if Jason Wynn gets really pissed off can he say #%*@ or does he have to say 'shoot'?" In a nutshell, HBO's response was, "this is cable, you can say almost whatever you want".



Now that HBO secured the rights to animate Spawn, their next question was how were they going to do this. Todd's artwork within the pages of each issue is so detailed that a lot of this look logistically cannot be animated. A lot of the story within these pages comes from the grimness of the artwork. Eric Radomski indicated that one of the biggest concerns was, "how to capture the intensity of the books and translate it to animated form so that the overseas animators could understand the look we are looking for, while also keeping within the budget and time constraints that we were faced with".

Working on the series became a learning process for Todd, HBO, and HBO's newly established animation division. Early on, after unsuccessful attempts at using outside animation studios, HBO realized that in order to produce a quality show successfully targeting an untapped adult audience that they would need to develop their own, in-house animation studio. Now a full-time unit at HBO, this studio has since begun developing other projects.

Now, two years later, the final work is being completed on the first 6 Spawn animated episodes each ½ an hour in length. The air date is tentatively scheduled for March or April of next year as both HBO and Todd want to ensure that what hits the screen is the best show possible. Everyone involved in this project has become very dedicated to its success, and as Eric Radomski describes, "we want to get the audience hooked so they are not able to turn the TV off, so that they become involved with these characters lives and forget that they are watching an animated show and instead are just watching a cool show."

Each month within the pages of this new, on-going Spawn title, Curse of the Spawn, you will find similar articles introducing you to Spawn the animated series. Each column will investigate a different topic and hopefully provide you with a good background before you sit down and watch that first episode. We want to bring you behind the scenes and show you what it takes to create an animated program the likes of which have never been seen before on an American network, created by an American animation studio. We plan on investigating topics such as the process by which an animation show is created, recording voices, choosing music, writing scripts, and much more while also introducing you to some of the people that brought this show to life by speaking with Todd, Catherine Winder the Producer, Eric Radomski, the Supervising Director and many more.

Feel free to write us at the address below. We want to get your feedback on this column while at the same time being able to address some of your most commonly asked questions.

Spawn the animated series
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END CAP

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WE ALL NEED A LITTLE CHAOS IN OUR LIVES

"In a far-off corner of the galaxy, there is a battle of Good vs. Evil. This conflict is not fought by armies, but by a handful of warriors picked from throughout the eons of time. Chosen for their distinctive skills, they are then adapted to fight in this war known as..."

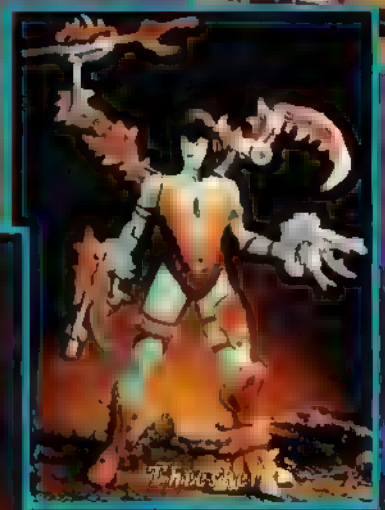
Thus begins the opening credits of the latest summer blockbuster. But it's not showing at a theater near you, it's only in your local store and shops. This blockbuster is the latest series of action figures from McFarlane Toys' Total Chaos. And the toy industry may never be the same again.

Rather than basing a line of toys off of the best-selling comic in America (been there, done that) or from a smash movie from New Line Cinema (coming in 1997 and starring Michael J. Fox, can't wait), we're doing that too), this line is my baby. It's a series of figures designed that don't match any preconceived depiction of something. These characters have never been in comics, movies, television talk shows, or Thanksgiving Day parades. They're just cool toys for toy's sake.

The storyline is simple. The Accord and the Domain have been battling for centuries, in a timeless struggle for control of the Universe. The characters who are fighting this battle are from many planets and dimensions. Combatants are chosen for their fighting skills and their devotion.

Al Simmons is from a slightly different Earth than the one chronicled in these pages. In this reality, he was never killed and never made a deal with Malebolgia. Now he uses his covert military skills to fight for the Accord, and has been equipped with an entire arsenal of weapons. His flame-thrower is built right into the armor, along with laser-guided missiles. This very posable figure also features a helmet that swings open, so the true face of Al Simmons can be seen.

Dragon Blade is also from Earth, but from an entirely different time period. A valiant warrior, his fighting skills have been improved by the new alloy armor he wears, courtesy of the Accord. With it, he can battle for his cause using weapons familiar to him: words and spears. The figure also comes with a shield and removable helmet, and cloth wrap. Then there are the scars on his face. Very impressive.



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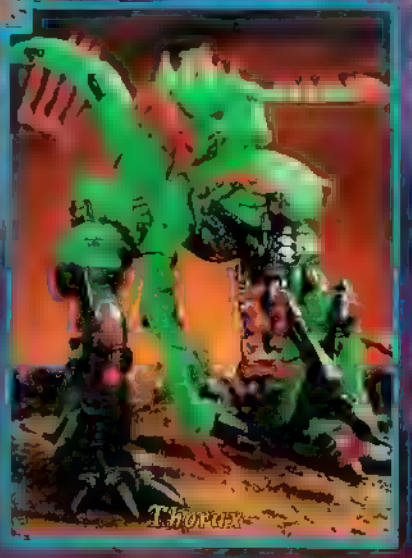

armor-plated, thick-skinned fighter is practically indestructible. While down on all fours, he can swing his head up to quickly survey the situation, and then let loose a blast from his turret cannon. Fans of our previous Cy-Gor figure will love this new "beastly" character.

The Domain has fierce warriors also. Gore was once a pirate, but now has his revenge on those who taunted him for being "differently-abled." He's been outfitted with cybernetic parts, more than enough to overcome the handicaps of the past. Along with his bionic parrot, he uses his harpoon for long-range attacks and his gaff for closed-in battles. Think of him as the Six Million Dollar Quasimodo-Ahab.

Thresher, the female of the group, is the cold-hearted victor of many aquatic battles. She fights for the Domain using her natural armor and her hydraulic-assisted claw. Of course, the big guns in her hands help out a bit, too. Not shown in the photo is the helmet that slips over her face during battles.

Rounding out the Domain's group is the most inhuman of warriors, Thorax. This radar-equipped insectoid has his jumping capability enhanced by the special hydraulics in his legs. His bright colors actually camouflage him in his native habitat, but the extra missiles would still make him stand out in a crowd. This is one mantis that makes his ENEMIES pray for mercy.

These six figures should all be in stores in September, so keep an eye out for them. And remember, we all need a little chaos in our lives. Total Chaos.

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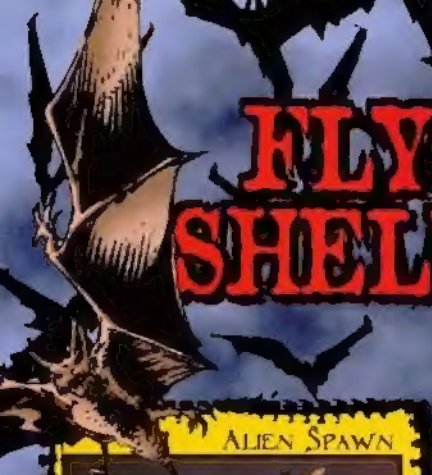

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